



Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Haley Barbour
Governor

Les Range
Executive Director

Office of Grant Management
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
No. 10-20

For the selection of a service provider for a

Teacher Training Program for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

Proposals are due:

BY: 2:00 P.M., CDST
ON: DECEMBER 30, 2009
TO: Charles Touchstone, Chief
Procurement
AT: Mississippi Department of Employment Security
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

Please address questions:

TO: Charles Touchstone, Chief
Procurement
AT: Mississippi Department of Employment Security
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213
EMAIL: bids@mdes.ms.gov

**Teacher Training Program for Early Childhood Care
and Education Professionals
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
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Example of Budget Narrative

Teacher Training Program for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Request for Proposals

I. Overview

- A. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is seeking proposals for a program that will promote recruitment and training in early childhood care, early childhood education, and preschool education. The program should utilize innovative techniques that reach out to incumbent workers in the early childhood field and to eligible adults, dislocated workers, underemployed individuals, and veterans. MDES is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for a one year project which, if successful, will:
- Promote sector strategy approaches that build partnerships of businesses, training providers, community organizations, and other key stakeholders around specific industries or sectors to address the workforce needs of business and training needs of workers
 - Promote sector strategies that enable low-income, displaced, and under-skilled adults to acquire the knowledge and skills for success in the early childhood care and education field
 - Increase enrollment of graduating trainees attending short term certification courses in the education career path.

II. Funding & Duration

This demonstration project will be funded at approximately \$150,000 for one year, beginning as soon as practicable after contract award and finalizing of contract negotiations. Funds will be made available from the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). All services and expenditures must meet WIA requirements.

It is hoped that other Federal, State, and local funds can be leveraged. MDES' contribution, however, is not expected to exceed \$150,000. If any contract ensues from this RFP and subsequent procurement process, it is understood and agreed between the contracting parties that the Agency shall be bound only to the extent of the funds available or which may become available for the purpose to this solicitation.

If a "for profit" entity is selected to deliver this project, the preferred contract method will be a performance based, fixed fee agreement.

III. Qualified Bidders

Proposing organizations must:

- Be licensed to do business in Mississippi

- Have experience in managing Federal funds
- Have a track record of meeting performance expectations
- Be able to access and leverage a substantial array of other resources beyond the funding provided by MDES

IV. Service Description

The service provider must describe how the following services will be delivered:

- Outreach, recruitment, and enrollment of incumbent workers in early childhood development who are in need of upgrading their skills, as well as eligible youth, adults, and dislocated workers:
 - Increasing the number of individuals in the target group who will receive and complete training;
 - Increasing the number of individuals in the target group who gain and retain employment upon completion of training; and
 - Contractor shall perform outreach and recruitment activities sufficient to maintain enrollment levels at training capacity. The Contractor shall describe its recruitment and selection process to identify potential trainees.
- Identifying and providing training opportunities may include but is not limited to:
 - Referral to existing training;
 - Expanding career opportunities for employment;
 - Establishing alternative training options, such as on-site classes, online content, try-out employment on-the-job training; and
 - Assessment of individual and business/institutional needs.

Contractor will be required to outline a training curriculum and content.

- A plan for ensuring training completion

This plan may include, but is not be limited to:

- Counseling
 - Support Services
- A plan for placement into jobs, continued education, or training programs

The proposal should clearly articulate the plan to move incumbent workers, eligible adults, and dislocated workers to a job in the early childhood development field, or continuing their education at a higher level. The Proposal should also explain how the project will assist participants in planning their future career advancement.

V. Budgeting

Funds received from MDES for this project may be spent on reasonable salaries and fringe benefits for project staff. Funding may also be budgeted for support services needs, primarily emergency transportation, and child care needs for registered WIA participants. Staff transportation costs such as mileage reimbursement for the use of personal vehicles may also be budgeted at comparable State approved reimbursement rates. The Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration sets the reimbursement rates for travel. A small amount may also be set aside for staff development and training, including attendance at the annual Governor's Workforce Conference.

Administrative costs are capped at 10% of the project budget. All costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable and allowable as described in WIA rules, state policies and procedures and in the applicable Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.

VI. Performance Indicators and Levels

The baseline period for evaluating the provider's performance will be 12 months for the execution of the contract. The Contractor will be evaluated quarterly, based upon the following Performance Indicators and any other indicators identified during negotiation:

Performance Indicators for Adults

Completion Rate (# of enrollees who complete)	75%
Entered Employment Rate (# of completers who enter employment)	79%
Retention Rate (# of completers who retain employment 6 months)	83%
Average Six-Month Earnings	\$9,200

Performance Indicators for Dislocated Workers

Completion Rate (# of enrollees who complete)	75%
Entered Employment Rate (# of completers who enter employment)	82%
Retention Rate (# of completers who retain employment 6 months)	85%
Average Six-Month Earnings	\$11,050

Performance Indicators for Youth

Completion Rate (# of enrollees who complete)	75%
Placement in Employment or Education (# of youth participants who enter employment or continued education)	67%
Attainment of a Degree or Certificate (# of youth participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate)	50%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains (# of youth participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels)	46%

The Contractor shall maintain contact with all participants, completers, and non-completers, to collect and document placement and retention data.

The Contractor will be required to submit a quarterly performance report to MDES.

VII. Proposal and Award Rules

A. Proposal Format

All proposers must use the attached fill-in-the-blanks Proposal Package (*Attachment A*). Proposals should be (1) typed and non-reduced, (2) on only one side of each page, and (3) numbered in sequence.

The proposal submission must consist of one original and four copies. The original must be signed by a person authorized to sign for the proposer's organization. Omissions, inaccurate submissions, or out-of-order responses may cause the proposer's score to be reduced substantially, and may lead to proposal rejection.

B. Acceptance of Proposal Content

The MDES reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is one that does not affect the cost stated in the proposal, give one party an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by all parties or adversely impact the interest of the MDES. Waivers, when granted, shall in no way modify the RFP requirements or excuse a party from full compliance with the RFP specifications and other contract requirements if the party is awarded the contract. The contents of the proposal of a successful proposer may become contractual obligations if a contract ensues. Failure of the successful proposer to accept these obligations may result in cancellation of the award. Precedence of contractual documents will be Contract, RFP, and Proposal (as accepted).

C. Due Date

Proposals must be received by 2:00 p.m. CDST, Wednesday, December 30, 2009.
Proposals sent through the mail must be addressed to:

Mississippi Department of Employment Security
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

Attention: Procurement
(601)-321-6066

Deposit of a proposal into the mail or delivery to a different person or address does not constitute proposal submission unless the proposal is in fact received at the foregoing address by the time stated. Hand delivery of proposals is strongly encouraged. Receipts will be issued upon request. Proposals that are hand-delivered must be submitted to the above address by the foregoing date and time.

D. Rejections of Proposals

MDES reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP, or to negotiate separately with any source whatsoever in any manner necessary to serve the best interest of MDES. This RFP is issued for information or planning purposes only. MDES does not intend to award a contract solely on the basis of any response made to this request or otherwise pay for the information solicited or obtained.

E. Changes

All awards will be based upon fund availability. MDES reserves the right to terminate or modify any part of this procurement process at any time and for any reason; to award one contract or multiple contracts; to negotiate changes; to make no awards; and to issue new and/or revised policies and clarifications at any time. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, addenda will be provided to all entities who received the original RFP.

F. Proposal Authorship and Ownership

Use of professional writers is discouraged since the quality of the proposal is one method for evaluating the skills of the staff and the ability of the organization to operate the proposed program. All proposal writers who do not work for the proposing organization on an ongoing basis must be identified and cannot be paid proposal writing fees from current or future MDES awards.

All proposals become MDES property. Proposals will be made available for inspection only after award of contract. For this reason, proprietary material should be clearly labeled as such. The classification of an entire proposal as proprietary or trade secret is not acceptable and may result in rejection of the proposal. Request to review proprietary information will be handled in accordance with state law and applicable procedures. All disclosures of proposal information to interested parties will be made in compliance with MDES policies and procedures established in accordance with the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 defined in Section 26-61-1 et seq., of the Mississippi Code and exceptions found in Section 25-61-9 and 79-23-1.

G. Conflict of Interest

All proposals must be accompanied by a statement disclosing (1) any involvement, financial or otherwise, that an employee, officer or agent of MDES may have in the proposing organization and (2) any involvement, financial or otherwise, that any employee, officer of any other governmental agency may have in the proposing organization.

H. On-Site Reviews and References

The MDES reserves the right to request information relative to references and to make on-site visits to the proposer's place of business for examination of program

capabilities. This examination may include inspection of facilities, review of the accounting system, and interviews with staff and trainees. On-site visits may be used in funding decisions.

I. Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Assurance

Contracts, grants, loans, purchases and all other financial transactions are administered by the MDES equally to all without regard to race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin, disability, or age. In addition, the Proposer understands that the MDES is an equal opportunity employer and maintains a policy that prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, or any other unlawful consideration. During the term of the contract, the contractor must strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services.

The proposer assures that, if it is awarded a contract through this RFP process, the proposer:

1. Will not discriminate in the provision of service, employment practices, and in all terms, conditions and privileges of employment; and
2. Will fully comply with Section 188 of the WIA Act, which prohibits discrimination, and with the assurance that is found at 29 CFR 37.20 (a) (1) of the WIA Regulations.

The MDES' Equal Opportunity Policy requires and supports equal opportunity and non-discrimination in all programs the MDES funds.

J. Common Rule

In accordance with Section .36 (e); A.110.44 (b) of the Common Rule, the MDES encourages, whenever possible, the utilization of small businesses, minority-owned firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms.

K. Fiscal Administration

Each service provider must establish and maintain accounting and reporting systems that meet MDES and Federal requirements.

L. Audit Bonding and Insurance

Each public or non-profit organization that expends a total of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) or more in Federal funds from all funding sources must conduct a single audit in accordance with the requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations. Any audit shall comply with applicable Federal and MDES rules, regulations, policies and procedures.

Each private-for-profit organization that expends five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) or more in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding within its fiscal

year must conduct an organization-wide financial and compliance audit performed on that fiscal year, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS), or a program-specific audit performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS).

Organizations that are not currently funded by the MDES **must** submit a copy of their most recent audit.

Prior to initial disbursement of funds, the MDES shall receive a statement from the contractor's insurer certifying that it has appropriate and comprehensive insurance covering any incident arising from its operation. Such insurance shall at a minimum, include the following types of insurance and coverage limits:

1. Comprehensive General Liability - \$1 million each occurrence, with MDES added as an additional insured
2. Workers Compensation
3. Employee Dishonesty Bond Insurance with third party liability coverage and with limits of \$100,000.00

Proposer understands that should the minimum amounts listed above prove to be inadequate at any point during the contract period, proposer will be required to obtain adequate insurance.

M. Pricing

The charges in the proposal must not exceed those charged by the proposer to any other individual or organization for the same or similar services.

The proposer must guarantee that prices and/or cost data have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition. This neither precludes nor impedes the formation of a consortium of companies and/or agencies.

The proposer further certifies that all costs and prices are good faith best estimates as of the time the proposal is submitted.

N. Response to Inquiries

All questions pertaining to this RFP must be submitted in writing to the above address by 3:00 P.M. CDST December 17, 2009. Inquiries may also be submitted via email to bids@mdes.ms.gov or by fax to (601) 321-6060 and must be received by MDES by the date indicated above. Questions submitted after this date and time will not be considered. Vendors shall provide an email address or fax number for MDES to direct the consolidated "question and answer" document. MDES answers will be provided in writing and transmitted via email or fax to all prospective vendors who are known to have received a copy of the original RFP. The RFP and the consolidated "question and answer" document will be posted on the MDES website (www.mdes.ms.gov then click on RFPs and Bid Notices). Only answers transmitted

in this manner will be considered official and valid by the MDES. No negotiations, decisions, or actions shall be initiated by any vendor as a result of any verbal discussion with any State or Agency employee or contractor.

VIII. PROPOSAL SCORING AND SELECTION

While point scores will be used to rank similar programs, the MDES will consider policy goals as final funding decisions are made. These policy goals may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Cost effective service delivery is important.
- All programs should exceed performance expectations.
- All WIA participants must be provided necessary services.
- Fiscal, Participant Management Information, and Monitoring systems must meet all applicable local workforce area, MDES and Federal standards.

An established track record in addressing the above policy goals may be a prime consideration in fund award decisions.

Lower rated proposals may be funded ahead of higher ranked proposals at the discretion of the MDES, if such a decision is necessary in order to meet a policy goal. Proposals deemed acceptable for funding are not guaranteed funding.

The MDES proposal selection process follows:

A. Responsive to the RFP

This is a pass/fail criterion applied to all proposals. If the proposal is incomplete, contains inaccurate information, or fails to contain the program design required by the RFP, it may be deemed unresponsive and may not be considered for funding.

B. Pre-Award Survey

This is a discretionary criterion that may be applied. It is based upon a site review to determine whether a new proposer's facilities, equipment, staffing levels, administrative systems, and staff qualifications are adequate.

C. Proposal Rating Criteria

Each responsive proposal will be scored on a 100 point scale, which follows:

1. Background and Track Record (20 points) - This criterion considers the proposer's background and past track record:
 - Background (10 points) - This sub criterion considers the extent to which the proposer's organization and background adequately position and qualify it to be, as appropriate, a service provider.

- Performance Achievement (5 points) - This sub criterion considers the proposer's track record in achieving performance objectives, goals, and standards, including enrollments and outcomes that are similar to those identified in Section VI. of this RFP.
 - Administrative Systems Operations (5 points) - This sub criterion considers the proposer's track record in operating fiscal, management information, and other administrative systems as required by Federal and State fund sources.
2. Program Design (45 points) - This criterion addresses the extent to which the proposer's program design addresses the applicable standards, activities, and services that are identified and described in Section IV. of this RFP.
 3. Cost Effectiveness and Planned Performance Outcomes (20 points) - This criterion analyzes the proposal's performance outcomes and cost effectiveness, including:
 - Planned Performance (8 points) – This sub criterion considers the extent to which the proposal's performance outcome levels are reasonable, in light of the MDES performance goals.
 - Cost Effectiveness (5 points) - This sub criterion considers the extent to which the proposer's costs are a) reasonable, necessary, allowable and allocable; b) justified by the proposer's program design; and c) clearly described.)
 - Budget Clarity (2 points) - Your proposal will also be rated on the extent to which the attached budget is clear and whether all costs are allowable under WIA rules. (Proposal Budget Narrative
 - In-kind Costs (5 points) - This sub criterion considers the in-kind contributions the proposer will make to support the proposed project.
 4. Sustainability and Alignment with the Governor's Workforce Priority Goals (15 points) – These criteria consider the proposal's plans for sustainability and alignment with the goals of the Governor's office, as follows:
 - Sustainability (7 points) - This criterion considers the proposal's plans for sustainability, either from self-sustaining practices or from other funding sources once this contract ends.
 - Alignment with Governor's Workforce Priority Goals (8 points) - Your proposal will also be rated on how well it aligns with the goals of the Governor's Office as outlined in the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, Momentum Mississippi, and Sector Strategies of the Mississippi Sector Policy Forum.

D. Negotiation Rights

MDES reserves the right to negotiate with any or all proposers concerning modification to proposals. Discussions may be conducted with offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award, but proposals may be accepted without such discussions.

E. Approval Process

A review board will evaluate and score each responsive proposer using the scoring criteria. The name of each responsive proposer that is recommended for funding will be forwarded to the MDES Executive Director for final authorization. The Personal Services Contract Review Board (PSCRB) must also approve this procurement.

F. Contracts

Funding awards will not be final until the MDES and the proposer have negotiated and executed a written contractual agreement and this agreement is approved by the Personal Services Contract Review Board. If a contract is awarded, the selected proposer will be required to comply with general provisions that will be part of the contract. These general provisions are included as Attachment B to this RFP. Any resulting contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the Personal Service Contract Review Board Regulations, a copy of which is available at 301 North Lamar Street, Jackson, MS, for inspection.

G. Incurring Costs

MDES assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred in anticipation of a contract.

H. Protests

If the proposer wishes to protest MDES' selection or fund allocation decision, the proposer must submit a written protest to MDES within 15 calendar days after MDES' notification of a decision. The protest will be conducted in accordance with MDES' procurement policy.

I. Representation Regarding Contingent Fees

The proposer represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a State contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in the contractor's bid or proposal.

J. Representation Regarding Gratuities

The proposer represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 7-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Personal Service Contract Procurement Regulations.

K. Acknowledgment of Amendments

Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the submission of their proposal, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security by the time and at the place specified for receipt of bids.

L. Certification of Independent Price Determination

The proposer certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without – for the purpose of restricting competition – any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other proposer or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a bid, or the methods or factors used to calculate the prices incorporated in proposal submittal.

M. Compliance with E-Verify

The proposer represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act (Senate Bill 2988 from the 2008 Regular Legislative Session) and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. The term “employee” as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, “status verification system” means the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. The proposer agrees to maintain records of such compliance and, upon request of the State, to provide a copy of each such verification to the State. The proposer further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereunder meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws of the State of Mississippi. The proposer understands and agrees that any breach of these warranties may subject the proposer to the following: (a) termination of this Agreement and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years, with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public, or (b) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to the proposer by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year, or (c) both. In the event of such termination/cancellation, the proposer would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to contract cancellation or loss of license or permit.

N. Consideration and Method of payment

The proposer will be reimbursed for allowable costs that have been identified and approved in a contract that the proposer and the MDES have negotiated and executed. Contractors will be required to maintain documentation necessary to support each cost.

Once selection has been made and the contract finalized, MDES agrees to pay the proposer in accordance with Mississippi law on “Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies”, Sections 31-7-301, et seq. of the 1972 Mississippi Code Annotated, as amended, which generally provides for payment by the State within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the invoice. The proposer understands and agrees that MDES is exempt from the payment of taxes. All payments shall be in United States currency.

The proposer understands that the State requires all contractors to submit invoices electronically throughout the term of the agreement. Vendor invoices shall be submitted to the state agency using the processes and procedures identified by the State. Payments by state agencies using the Statewide Automated Accounting System (SAAS) shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the State. These payments shall be deposited into the bank account of the contractor’s choice.

The proposer understands that the acceptance of payment from MDES shall operate as a release of all claims against the State.

O. Relationship of Parties

It is expressly understood and agreed that MDES enters into a contract with a proposer based on the purchase of a service and not based on an employer-employee relationship.

P. Applicable Laws

The Proposer is responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Q. Governing Law

This solicitation and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Mississippi and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi.

IX. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUBMISSION

RFP Issue Date		Dec. 8, 2009
Questions to MDES by	3 P.M. CDST	Dec. 17, 2009
MDES Written Responses		Dec. 22, 2009
Proposal Opened	2 P.M. CDST	Dec. 30, 2009
Award Notification		Pending PSCRB approval
Contract Effective Date (On or after)		Pending PSCRB approval

The proposal submission must consist of one original and four (4) copies. The original must be signed by a person authorized to sign for the proposer's organization and each

partner agency/entity. **All proposals must be received by the MDES no later than 2:00 p.m. CDST, December 30, 2009.**

It is suggested that if a proposal is mailed to the MDES, it should be posted in certified mail with a return receipt guaranteed. The MDES will not be responsible for mail delays or lost mail.

Proposals should be mailed to and labeled as follows:

Proposal for Teacher Training Program for Early Childhood Care
and Education Professionals RFP 10-20
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Chief, Procurement & Other Services
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

SEALED PROPOSAL – DO NOT OPEN

Or delivered and labeled as follows:

Proposal for Teacher Training Program for Early Childhood Care
and Education Professionals RFP 10-20
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Chief, Procurement & Other Services
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

SEALED PROPOSAL – DO NOT OPEN

Submission Deadline: 2:00 p.m., CDST, December 30, 2009.

Proposals shall be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages addressed to the Department specified above.

One (1) original and four (4) copies shall be submitted.

1. Proposals shall be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages addressed to the Department specified above.
2. One (1) original and four (4) copies shall be submitted.
3. Receipt or acceptance of a proposal does not imply commitment or obligation on the part of the State of Mississippi to fund any proposal submitted.
4. Deposit of a proposal into the mail or delivery to a different person or address does not constitute proposal submission unless the proposal is in fact received at the foregoing address by the time stated. Hand delivery of proposals is strongly encouraged. Receipts

will be issued upon request. Proposals that are hand-delivered must be submitted to the above address by the foregoing date and time.

5. The parties submitting proposals are responsible for ensuring that they are delivered by the required time and assume all risks of delivery. **Proposals and modifications or corrections thereof received after the closing time specified will not be considered.** Any proposal received subsequent to the specified date and time will be returned to the prospective contractor unopened. The proposal must be signed by a company official with authorization to bind the contractor to its provisions.
6. Proposals submitted by wire, e-mail, electronic format, or phone will not be accepted. Proposals are to be submitted in writing with appropriate certification signatures as indicated.
7. All proposal material submitted in writing shall become the property of the MDES.
8. Proposals will not be opened publicly. Proposals will be made available for inspection only after award of contract.
9. The proposal shall be valid for at least 60 days subsequent to the proposal opening.

X. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS AND FORMS

The following are included as attachments to this request:

Attachment A – Proposal Package

Attachment B - General Contract Provisions

*Attachment C - Budget Narrative
Example of Budget Narrative*